

School for retarded opens in Almonte

Ottawa Journal added p. 3

TUE JAN 30 1979

ALMONTE — R. Tait McKenzie School for the mentally retarded was officially opened in Almonte Tuesday before about 125 people. Lanark County board of education John Montreuil noted education for the retarded has progressed from 1966 when a Smiths Falls nursery school manned and supported by volunteers opened, to the present with a modern building fully-financed by county taxpayers. The school opened last September, with principal Wayne Hedderston and a staff of three. It serves North Lanark county and has 19 students ranging in age from six to 19 years.

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Madolyn Tait, centre, was presented with a life membership by the National Council of Girl Guides of Canada for her 47 years of continuous service to guiding. Joining Tait from left are Susan McGuire, Welland division Girl Guide commissioner and Diane Moxness, Niagara area commissioner.

Tribune photo

Guiding light honored

By **PAT BAREVICH**
Tribune staff writer

WELLAND — Apart from birthday celebrations and wedding anniversaries, few people have 47 continuous years of anything to celebrate.

But that's how long Madolyn Tait has been involved in Girl Guides.

"In Guides, you always made the most wonderful friends...and guiding taught me a great deal. When I was a girl, I was always shy, but guiding taught me to have friends and not be so bashful — it's been the most meaningful thing in my life."

Tait said she started in Brownies in 1934, when she was seven years of age and has been involved ever since. Currently she serves as program adviser for the Welland division, but her career as a volunteer Girl Guide leader began in 1944 when she became lieutenant of the First Welland Guide Company.

Four years later she was made

Captain and in 1954 she left the company to become District Commissioner of Welland-Fonthill-Crowland.

In 1957 she became commissioner of the restructured Welland Division and in 1963 she was awarded the Certificate of Merit by the National Council of the Girl Guides of Canada.

Through the years Tait has also served on the Ontario Council of Girl Guides of Canada and as Deputy International Co-ordinator for the Niagara area, where she helped girls to apply for international guiding trips.

Susan McGuire, Welland Division Commissioner, said about 700 girls and 100 adult volunteers are active in the Welland division of Girl Guides, with girls from five to 17 years of age involved in programs ranging from Sparks to Rangers.

The Welland division of Girl Guides Canada is divided into four districts including Welland West, St. Patricks, Pelham and Port Colborne, she said.

Dec 4/1990

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Y.W.C.A. Secretary Addresses Jr. W.A.

The October meeting of the Junior Group of the Woman's Association of Simcoe Street United Church was held recently at the home of Mrs. Robert Holden, King Street East, with a good attendance. Mrs. Holden, the president, presided during the business session.

The speaker of the evening was Miss Elizabeth Pitt, secretary of the new Y.W.C.A. As a member of St. John's Ambulance Brigade, Miss Pitt travelled to Britain with several other members of the same organization via a convoyed freighter, docking at the Scottish port of Oban. For a time, Miss Pitt was stationed at Basingstoke, going on later to Whitechapel Hospital built in the seventeenth century; she also served in several first aid "tube" stations, including those located at Piccadilly and Leicester Square, in London.

The speaker gave a vivid word-picture of conditions in England at the time of the buzz bomb Blitz and related many interesting experiences during her sojourn in the British Isles, spicing her talk with sparkling bits of humor, touching on the ability of the British people to adapt themselves to conditions even when the buzz bombs were falling at regular intervals of 20 minutes.

A hearty vote of thanks was extended to Miss Pitt for her interesting address. A dainty lunch was served at the close of the meeting.

Teacher of jail inmates hopes classroom will be enlarged

By PHIL CARDELLA
of The Observer

Teacher Joan McPhedran's dream of teaching at the Sarnia Jail is bigger than the room she teaches in.

She hopes that plans to make the room larger to accommodate more students will become a reality soon and maybe include a blackboard.

The Adult Learning Centre teacher arrives at the Sarnia Jail each morning to teach inmates basic literacy to finishing their high school diplomas. And there's nothing threatening or distracting about teaching here. She's a teacher, the inmates are her students and this is her present assignment.

"It's no different here. It takes awhile to get into the building but once you're in, it's no different," says Mrs. McPhedran. The voluntary aspect of the jail teaching program makes it easy to teach. The ones who come to learn really want to be in class.

The program began three years ago through the initiative of the staff and teacher Joan Doull who felt the need to further educate inmates who may need it most, to help get jobs or increase self-esteem.

Most of the students have below average education although they have the ability to learn the same as anyone else, says Mrs. McPhedran, who is experiencing her first contact

in the area of criminology.

"It's challenging and interesting. These students are the same as students anywhere. They're no different. I have no idea what they're in for, that's none of my business. I'm here to teach, they're here to learn."

Adult education was a long time coming in jails and in community life in general. She says the acceptance of education is indicative of adult education being seen as important for all.

After an initial assessment, she puts her students into a suitable course. Most of the work is self study with a teaching period in the morning to check over the work.

"It takes a lot of positive en-

couragement to get them through one barrier and make them feel they can do it." Even though the jail is a short term stay facility, that doesn't mean students can't get a good start on learning or transfer their credits to other schools.

"The time factor shouldn't excuse us from attempting to offer to do things with people," rationalizes Mrs. McPhedran.

And there are plans. She's excited about an expansion of her class in the near future and perhaps expanding the literature program. Currently there are stacks of paperback books and hardcovers on a metal rack in a storage room.

And jail superintendent Robert Dickson wants to put in an educational video system and other facilities here to make doing time, productive time.

"We're not talking about \$200,000. Rehabilitation programs don't have to be a high cost factor, it's utilizing what we have," says Mr. Dickson who advocates offering any community resource available to jail inmates to improve their lives.

"Just because it's a short term facility should not stop us from the educational endeavor," he said.

Monotony a punishment for inmates serving time in the Sarnia Jail

By PHIL CARDELLA
of The Observer

There's not much happening in the day rooms of the Sarnia Jail. Inmates play another hand of rummy or euchre, watch the daytime soaps on a black and white TV, or sit on the floor of the cell block.

In jail, monotony is punishment and a job in a kitchen, painting a wall or scrubbing the floor can be enticing for prisoners waiting for their sentences to elapse.

Sarnia Jail superintendent Robert Dickson would prefer to see inmates in the jail reading, writing or taking part in an educational upgrading and high school program. For Mr. Dickson, time in jail can be well spent if inmates read a novel or go to school.

Despite the short term stays of most inmates at the Sarnia Jail, from 20 days to six months, Mr. Dickson is undeterred from his position of trying to put meaningful learning back into the lives of offenders.

"The biggest thing is getting them back into something constructive. Whether (an inmate) takes math or reading is immaterial to me. It's the fact the guy is going in the right direction.

"Some inmates come here for a month or so on a remand and decide to take the initial step of getting into a program. When they move on to another facility or get out of jail, the work has already begun," says Mr. Dickson, a tall professorial-looking man, who takes a compassionate view of the plight of prisoners and says it does society good to educate and prepare them for their re-introduction into society.

Attired in a tweed jacket and loose fitting tie, he looks as though he belongs in a college classroom. But he's comfortable in his role as an administrator with Ontario Ministry of Corrections over a 24-year career.

Mr. Dickson doesn't prefer to measure rehabilitating prisoners by looking at the numbers that stay out of jail when they get out. There are factors that work against inmates, says Mr. Dickson.

Prisoners may find it difficult to get a job if they've spent two years in an institution and may relapse into behavior out of frustration. Instead, the measure is to look at the people who haven't slipped back into criminal behavior.

"Some people say rehabilitation doesn't work and that we should throw away the key and forget about them. I can understand the frustrations of society, but if you count the number of bodies that leave a place like this and don't get into trouble. If one incident happens it snowballs and everybody hears about it but they still haven't talked about the 4,000 people who get a job and stay out of jail."

Inmate programs teach education from the pre-literacy level to a high school diploma, life skills, and cooking trades as well as treatment programs for impaired drivers and Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. All the programs are voluntary for prisoners and are run from the contributions of time given freely by volunteers and ministers.

The Sarnia Jail has a capacity of 91 inmates. It has 50 volunteers that see inmates on a consistent basis. It is experimenting with allowing native alcoholics outside the facility for alcohol treatment on the reserve and has a temporary absence program for inmates that carry on regular jobs and return to jail on weekends and weeknights.

"Volunteers are invaluable. They are important and it's so surprising what people can offer from teaching the illiterate how to read, elementary math or a form of counselling. It lets an inmate talk to someone out-

side opposed to talking to his cellmate all the time. It's all so beneficial and it's surprising how much inmates appreciate it, says Mr. Dickson.

In the 24 years that Mr. Dickson has been involved with the system he's seen the change from a negligible number of treatment and educational programs to an emphasis on the need and prominence.

The next step may be closed circuit educational television programs which can be implemented at a low cost and can be seen by inmates along the dayrooms where most of their waking hours are spent.

The bleak walls and concrete and steel enclosures underlie the deprivation of being in a jail. Jail is not an easy place to be. With the exception of a few walls brightly painted with native art, there is a similar environment to be found anywhere inside. Inmates, housed 15 to a cell block, get up at the same time each day, eat at precise hours, and wear the same blue uniforms.

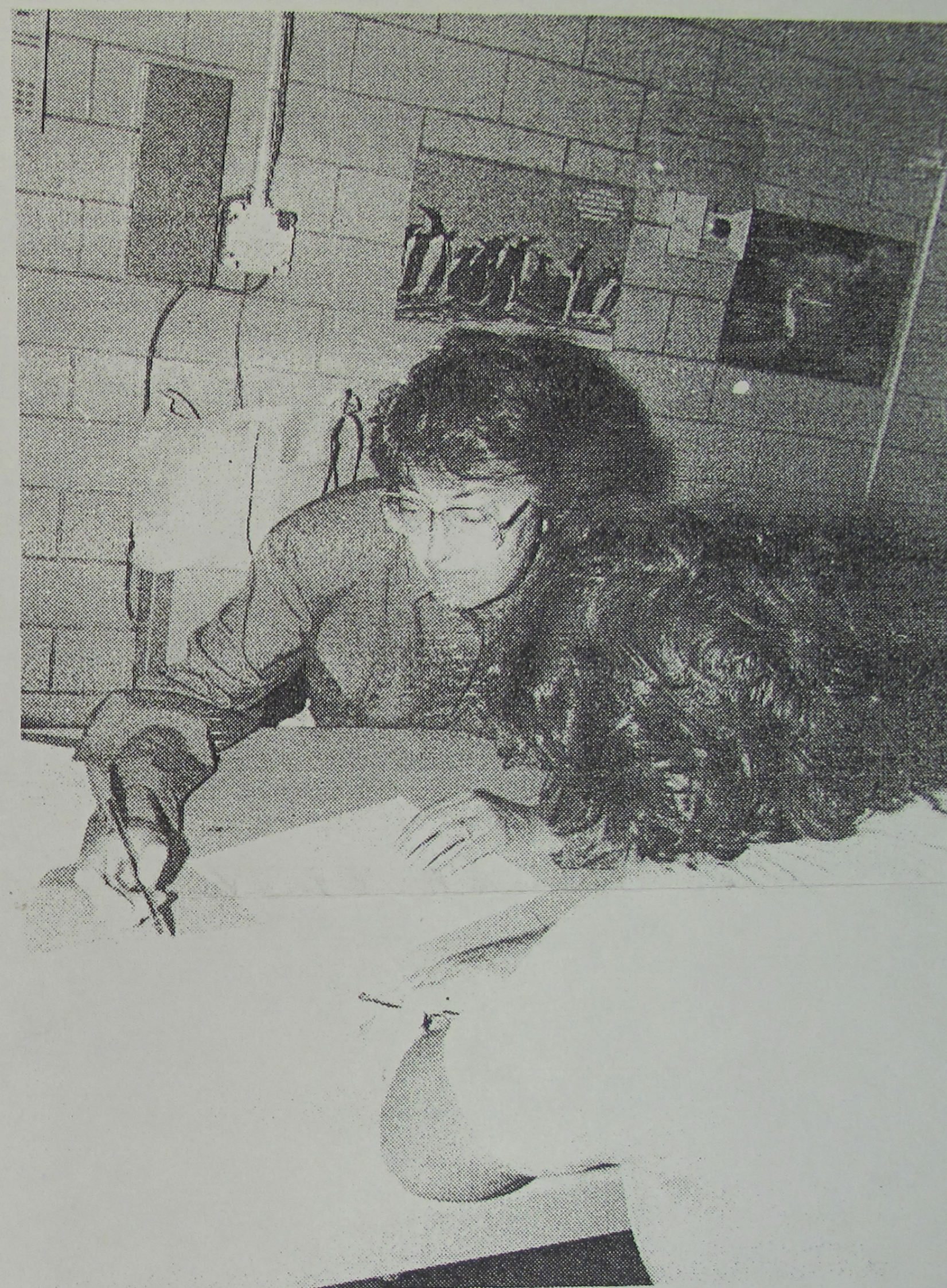
"If I said to you that you would be going to your room for six months with the blinds down and just lay around, you would get awfully bored. The inmates ask to work or learn. They want to be active."

The level of formal education possessed by inmates is below the Ontario average, professes Mr. Dickson, but that does not make them stupid people.

"We see guys with so much talent from bricklayers, to artists; these people are far from illiterate or stupid people."

Many wind up in jail from problems related to alcohol or drug use stemming from younger years of life.

And there's no such thing as a lost cause or a person unamenable to learn a trade and get a job no matter what his background, emphasizes



SARNIA JAIL TEACHER Joan McPhedran of the Adult Learning Centre tutors an inmate in

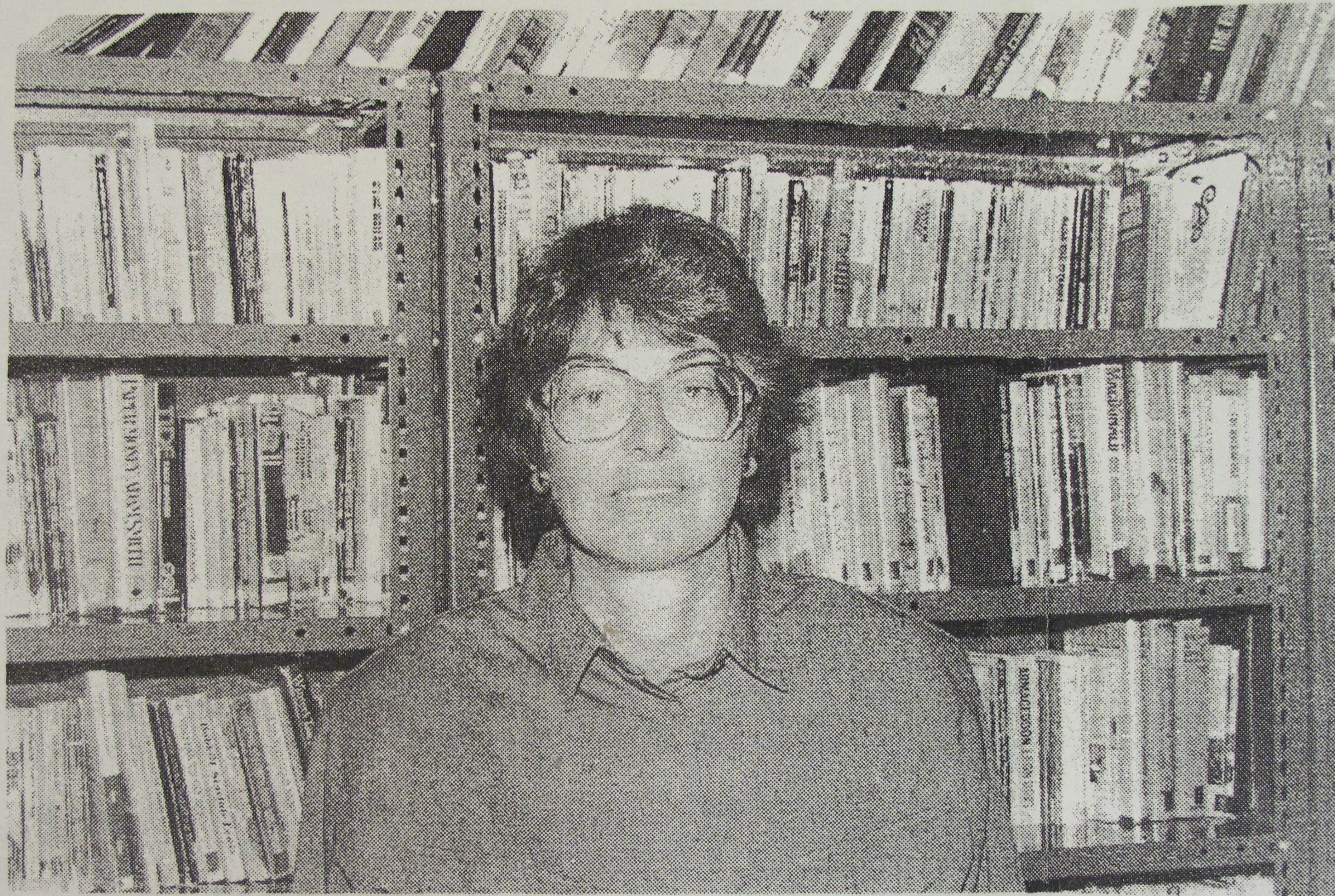
mathematics. She says she finds her job challenging and interesting with students here no different than students at other schools.

Observer Photo

Mr. Dickson.

A case in point is an inmate who has spent only a handful of months outside of the correctional system in the last 20 years. Now he wants to become an apprentice cook with the endorsement of the superintendent.

"I don't know if he'll stay out of jail but we're working with this guy in preparation for his release. We have to give people the benefit of the doubt. We cannot give anyone the lost cause treatment. Why am I here? At most we need two staffers around here. One to lock them up



JOAN MCPHEDRAN, a teacher at the Sarnia Jail, shows the books that are available to inmates as an important resource to them. Virtually any book is

available to the jail population through the library system.

Observer Photo

Budding author places in contest

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By: Norma West Linder

In the annual poetry competition sponsored by the Edmonton Branch of the Canadian Authors Association, eleven-year-old Amy McPhedran, 481 Lakeshore Rd., Sarnia, won third prize in the Limerick Category as well as an honourable mention in the Youth Class for one of her haiku.

Over two hundred poets sent over a thousand poems into the contest. 157 of these were published in the 1985 **Alberta Poetry Yearbook**, an anthology now in its 56th consecutive year.

Amy's amusing limerick concerns

a hungry but finicky bear that polishes off a human being with the words, "Really I so prefer lamb!"

Amy's love of humour is evident in her bright brown eyes and in her lively imagination. But she can be serious, too. In seventeen syllables, Amy captures in her winning haiku the silent white beauty of a whooping crane.

The young poet credits her Grade Five teacher, Mr. Kirby, with giving her a great deal of encouragement in her writing. Other teachers and her parents have been very supportive as well. Amy's favourite poetic forms are the cinquain and the haiku. She writes about the world around her, and she chooses her words with a craftsmanship that belies her years.

Amy enjoys reading and remembers Dennis Lee's **Alligator Pie** with great fondness. She has other hobbies as well as writing. The young poet recently appeared as the Second Witch in **The Wizard of Oz** - an ultra modern witch with a vacuum cleaner replacing the traditional broom. The production was put on by her school - George VI. Her sister, Laura, played Dorothy.

Amy is convinced that writing will always be important to her. "If I don't end up writing for a living," she says, "I'll always do it as a hobby."



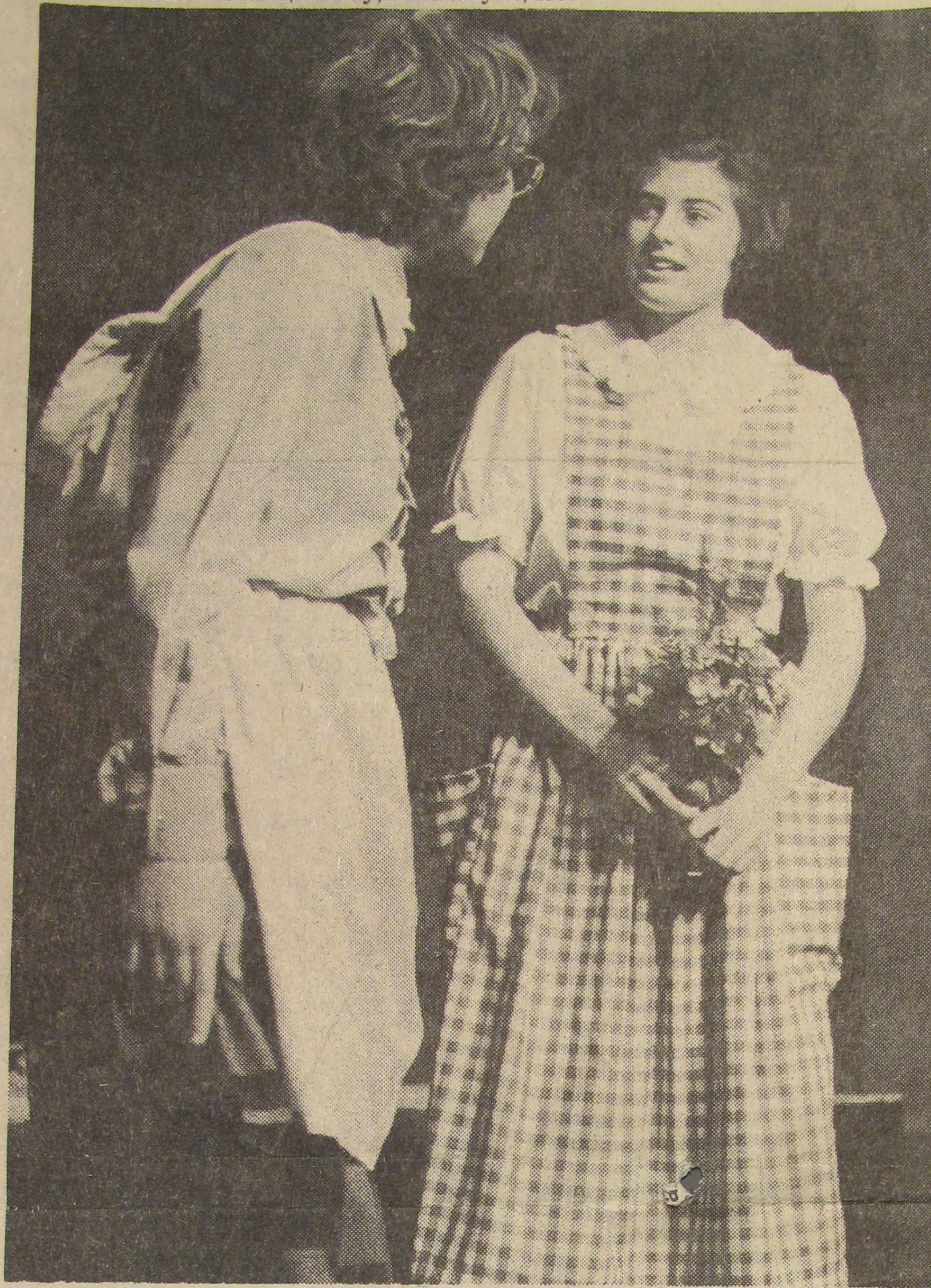
GUIDES HONORED

FOUR MEMBERS of the 15th Sarnia Guide Company received their all round cords recently during their first annual barbecue and award night. The

guides, who meet at St. Giles Church, have now received the highest award obtainable as a guide. Honorees from left are: Leela Singh, 12, Jakki

Glivicky, 12, Kate McKellar, 11, and Amy McPhedran, 11.

Observer Photo



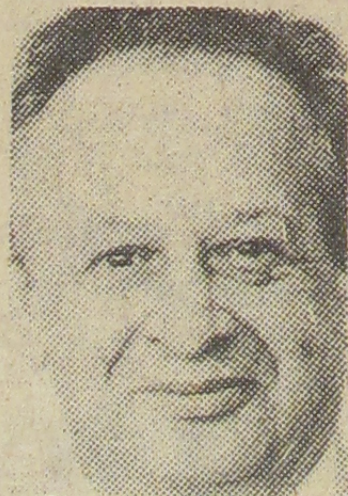
THE CAST and production crew of the Wizard of Oz made its debut, Thursday at King George VI School. Aunt Em, left, played by Sharon Roberts, 13, tries to find out where Dorothy, played by Laura McPhedran, 13, spent her time

after school while worrying about a possible twister. The play will be put on Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and again next Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. Both girls are Grade 8 pupils of the school.

School presents enjoyable Wizard of Oz

by
**NEIL
MOTCHAN**

for The Observer



"We're Off To See The Wizard, The Wonderful Wizard Of Oz and, travelling via King George VI School, I fell in with an auditorium full of Moms, Dads, sisters, brothers, Grandma's and Grandpa's and followed Dorothy and fifty-odd talented kids down the Yellow Brick Road.

"The Wizard Of Oz," the brainchild of John Kirby, who suffered a heart attack last November, was a really good school show, dedicated to its mentor in his absence.

Very significant was the work put in by around 70 parents and friends which resulted in a technologically-sound show with fine decor, wardrobe, makeup, sound, lighting and special effects. Special mention for producer John McPhedran and stage manager John Barker for a great contribution over many months.

Teacher/director Ruth Mattingly took over where John Kirby had to leave off and, with the help of many other teachers and a patient, long-

suffering principal Al McLean, the performance went without a hitch.

And what of these talented youngsters, drawn from Grades 4 to 8?

A very pretty Laura McPhedran, in the role of Dorothy, warbled her way over the rainbow to Munchkinland. (Toni Rutherford also plays this arduous role well as the alternate). Her house, carried on the wings of a tornado, landed her on top of a wicked witch in that part of Oz where she was greeted by a bunch of Munchkins and their Mayor (Jody Hamilton), in the most colorful clothes and fantastic coiffes.

You all know the story so I won't go into that except that the little people show Dorothy the Yellow Brick Road to Emerald City after she meets Scarecrow (who wants to ask the Wizard for a brain) and Tin Man, rust, oil can and all (who needs to get himself a heart). Craig Charrington is Scarecrow and Ian Philp is Tin Man and they complete the trio when they are joined by Kevin Tighe, as the Cowardly Lion (who wants some courage). I forgot to mention that the Sorceress of the North (Jennifer Cook) is the cute fairy who helps see them off on their journey.

So that Dorothy can go home to Kansas, the Wizard, when they reach Emerald City, tells the wandering quartet to eliminate the Wicked Witch of the West. This amazing character is boiled in her own bat juice and, as the story goes, the Scarecrow gets his

brain, Tin Man gets his heart, Lion gets his courage and Dorothy gets her passage back to Kansas (in a rocket-ship, no less).

Apart from the large and entertaining chorus, other characters were played by Sharon Roberts, Kevin Ptolemy, Stephen Roberts, Barry Jones, Christina Hey (who is the relief Wicked Witch), Rebecca Vance and a bunch of Generals led by Craig Ryder. In Emerald City, Melissa McLellan, Kate McKellar, Teressa Barnes, Amy McPhedran, Barbie Wilson, Kate Brennan and Alun Williams all help out.

While the whole cast was very good, some performances were exceptional. Laura McPhedran's Dorothy was warm, likeable and enjoyable. Jody Hamilton in the dual roles of the Munchkin Mayor and the Wizard was very good. Kelly Kelsey as the Wicked Witch was all that a witch should be. But two really excellent characters were Craig Charrington (the Scarecrow) and Kevin Tighe (the Lion). Their spontaneous humor was an absolute treat for everyone.

A very special mention for music director/vocal coach/pianist Sue Wilson, who has volunteered her time for all rehearsals (and the onstage show) since the show was started.

"The Wizard Of Oz" is playing at King George VI School until Saturday this week and next Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. I liked it and so will you.

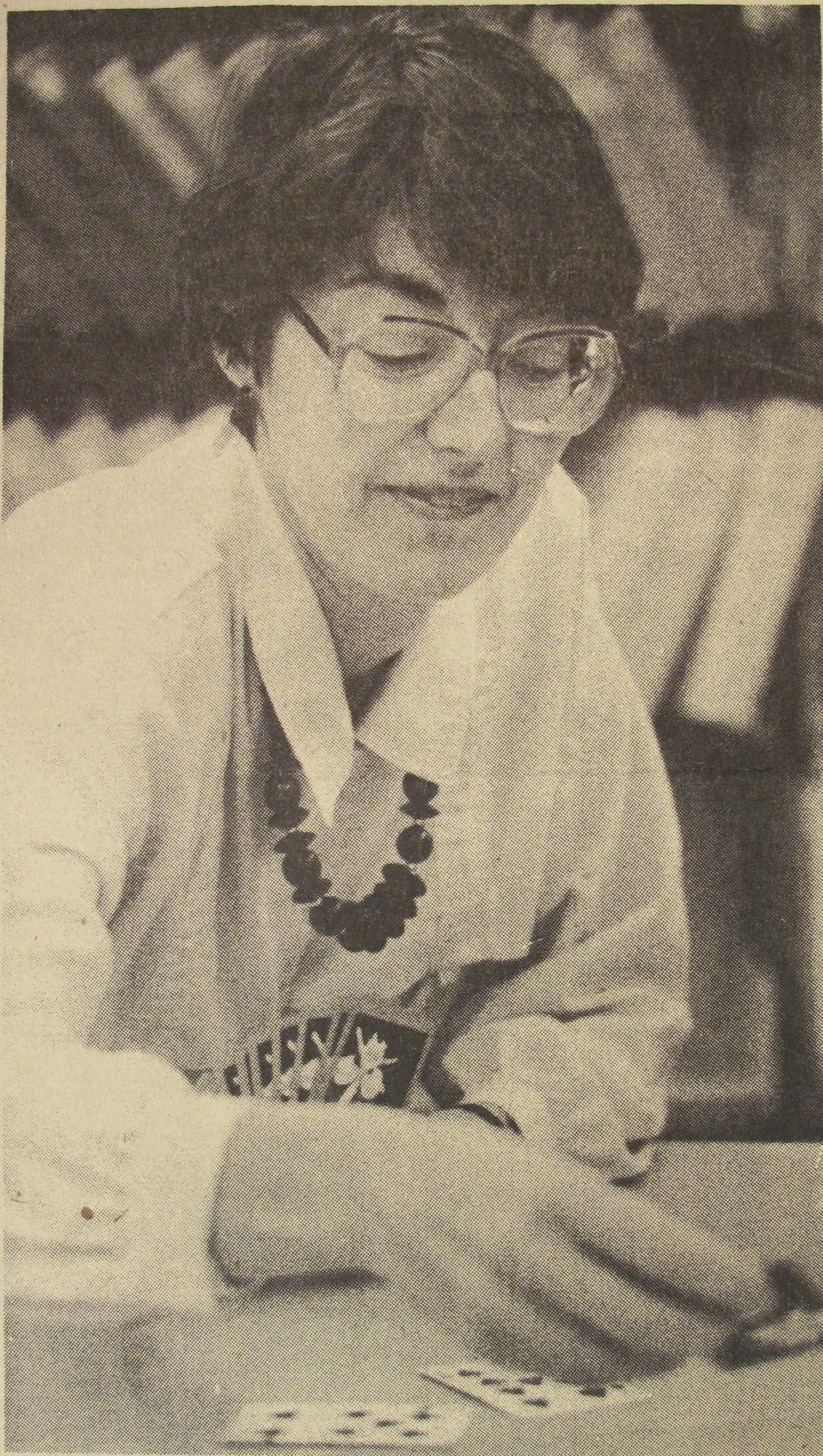
The Observer's Team of the Day



Northern Vikings

Northern Vikings captured the Lambton Secondary Schools Athletic Association senior girls basketball league championship this year. Sitting from left: Marcy Wood and Carolyn Leaver. Second row from left:

Stephanie Packer and Stacey Cornelious. Back row from left: Jen Dugan, Shelley Holden, Laura McPhedran, Nancy Jones, Tammy Brown, Sherri Griffin and coach Bob Cornelious.



Dessert bridge planned

The Adult Learning Centre, at the George Perry School, will be holding its first dessert bridge on Feb. 22 at St. Bartholomew's Church, 7:30 p.m. All proceeds will be used to enhance educational opportunities for adults in Lambton County. Warming up her bridge playing skills is staff member Joan McPhedran. Tickets for the dessert bridge are available at the school.

Observer Photo



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